

A SERMON,

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PREACHED IN

Christ Church, Ottawa,

APRIL 23RD, 1861,

Being the occasion of the Anniversary of
St. George's Day,

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CHAPLAIN.

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST.

OTTAWA :

"CITIZEN" STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.

1861.

SERMON.

REVELATIONS, XII Chap., 7th and 8th Verses.—“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven.”

In these words we have brought before us a description of the Church Militant here on earth. On the one side, a stern enemy is represented, seeking her destruction; whilst on the other, a powerful friend standing forth to the rescue. The archangel Michael, with his hosts, are represented in deadly combat with the great dragon and his angels. Hence we may see, that if the Church has strong enemies to contend with—if she has to fight against “principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places”—yet still she has power to do battle, power that shall enable her to prevail! For “Angel hosts tarry around her.” Do we ask a proof of this? Then read our text! Do we seek further information? Then dive deeper into the sacred page for facts, and if we would appreciate the beauty, as well as comfort of such provision, then let experience raise her voice in attesting to the gracious wisdom of the Eternal in so caring for His people! That Angels are appointed by the Almighty to protect His people, is evident from such passages as these:—“The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” (Ps. 34.7) And again of

Angels, St. Paul asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1.14). From both of these passages we may learn that Holy Angels are ever present attending the children of God. And if we look to facts as narrated in the sacred page, then we shall see *embassies* of Angels appearing to the faithful. Now two, now three, now a host—suddenly taking substantial form—reveal themselves to men. It was an Angel that spake comfortably to Hagar, deploring her wretchedness on being cast out of Abraham's house. Daniel could exclaim, "My God hath sent His Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouth, that they have not hurt me." (Dan. VI.22). With gentle love, and tender sympathy—as though partaker of the same humanity—the Angel Gabriel made known, to the lowly virgin, the solemn and mysterious part she had to take in the Incarnation. When in dark perils of the sea, the Great Apostle of the Gentiles was promised safety by an "Angel of the Lord." When holy Lazarus died to this world, he found himself resting on the arms of Angels, being tenderly wafted to the sweet peace of Abraham's bosom. It was the Angel of the Lord that smote the first born of Egypt, both of man and beast. When Pharoah would not suffer Israel to depart in peace, and when more than ten thousand of their Assyrian foe encamped against them, an Angel of God went forth with his drawn sword and slew the host. And who of God's people have not found much comfort from meditating on Holy Angels and their special offices to men? We might not have known it; yet doubtless we have oftentimes been delivered from much pain and misery through the instrumentality of Angels. And surely there is a necessity for all we have said on this being succoured by Angels, when we call to mind that there are myriads of fallen angels, of different degrees, continually plotting against us to overthrow us. To see this we have only to read our text; and to be thoroughly convinced of the fact, we need but refer to one or two other passages of the Sacred Word. It was the devil that circumvented the fall of man; who led man on, and encouraged him in vice; who suggested murder, and lying, and every other atrocity; and whose unbounded presumption still leads

him to accuse God as though acting an inconsistent part with man. In short, he is ever on the alert to find some means for increasing his power. And so as "an angel of light," and "as a roaring lion"—full of his own devices—he is ever opposing himself, if not immediately, yet mediately, through man to God. Laying traps, he seeks to catch men. He humbleth himself to the very ground, that the poor and innocent, being deceived, may fall into the hands of his captains. The children of God must always derive comfort from the thought of being continually attended by Angels, not only *endued with power from God*, but also *made desirous to sustain them*, when attacked by their spiritual foes. We know not what miserable and wretched beings we should be, if left without their society. It is the thought of this that cheers the solitary labour; the lonely walk; the feeling of bereavement. It is this that fills the courts of the Lord's House when men are too negligent, or care not to frequent them. Influenced by this spirit, the great and devoted John Bunyan wrote his allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress," which has for so long time proved full of comfort to all classes of Christians. But we must not suppose that God has made this provision for man, in order that man may sit down and rest content with himself, as though he had nothing to do. Far from it. The very sense of this ought to rouse him to more zeal—more determination. For a great work is ours; and when the best has accomplished all in his power, yet he will find more remaining to be done. Yes, a great work is ours, being connected with that of angels, yet such as they cannot undertake. Man has to labour from morn till night, both for himself and his neighbour. To the day of his departure from this world, he has, in this two-fold work, to be striving to live to God. In the next place, we have to remember that what holy Angels do for us, they do only *as instruments of God*. "They are sent by God to minister to us." They can do nothing of themselves. We must also see that we do no act of homage, much less of worship, to them, for that were pure idolatry, and very grievous to them. Like every other provision Almighty God has made, whether in nature or in grace, we must take and receive it, because *He* has appointed it

—He, and no other. We may not be always able to perceive the reason of this or that appointment, but His will is, or ought to be, sufficient.

We see, then, that the mission of ministering Angels does not interfere with our assisting one another. For why should it follow that, because we know that God has appointed Angels to help men, that we should feel that the ties of our relationship with one another were at all interfered with when any of our poor brethren lack, or our sick seek aid, in counsel or advice? So far from such being the case, by this means, the rather ought we to be roused up to assist. For if Angels have capacities and desires for assisting man, and are commissioned by God to carry out this design, how much more so is such the case with man—man who is the same all the world over. And why is man better adapted to this work? But why institute a comparison at all, since the work of angels for man is in one sphere, that of man for man in another? When we ask, then, why it is that man is better capable of helping man than angels are, we mean that man has gifts beyond angels, and certain duties devolving on him in consequence of having sprung from the same source—the nature of the reliever and the relieved being the same. For are we not all from the same? Came not all from the same God? But there is still a higher reason—one which comprehends all the rest; and it is the fact of *our union with Christ*. It was in consequence of this the Holy Saviour said, “By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” “If a man abide in me, he shall bring forth much fruit.” The Apostle of Love, too, echoed the same when he wrote, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of falling in him.” St. James, influenced by the same teaching wrote, “Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

So then it is evident that if Angels are sent by God to fight for us, we have also to take the sword, not only in our own defence, but every man in the defence of his brother. Oh blessed religion of Jesus, that teacheth us such doctrine as this! Oh divine faith which thus influ-

ences man ! Oh sublime creed, marvellously adapted to man, the highest order in the majestic creation of the Triune Jehovah !

But how does this bear on the subject of this day ?— This day on which all our hearts seem to beat with fresh life ! This day on which we all unite—high and low, rich and poor, one with another, and as one man move along with banners flying over our heads and signs upon our breasts ! and then assemble in God's House to worship and adore Him ; to invoke His presence to go with us, to be with us, on all sides ! Do we ask how ? Look we then to our banners, and mark we well our signs ! Here we see the sacred sign of the Cross : at once we are reminded of the great sufferings of our Master on our account, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, and finally yielded Himself to a cruel death. From His example we learn to go forth and suffer for our brethren. The sign is red, and thereby we are reminded that we ought to suffer for our brethren even unto blood. " Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. These are the words of our dear Lord ; and agreeably with this, holy men, in every age, have given their lives for their brethren when necessary, and so have formed the noble army of martyrs. Again, our banners depict a warrior, clothed in coat of mail, with spear in hand, riding in triumph over a deadly dragon. Hence we may learn that we are all to clothe ourselves in the full panoply of the Gospel, and so go forth, conquering, and to conquer—treading down all enemies under us. Whether St. George ever existed, or the glorious exploits imputed to him were ever performed, the moral is all the same ; it is all full of meaning. It unmistakably teaches us that we are to go forth and help our brethren, even unto death. It seems to reiterate the words of St. Paul, " Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. VI. II.17.) Surely all this is most agreeable with the design of our noble Society, established for the defence of our brethren under peculiar circumstances.

Let us go a little into practical detail. Our public or private men, looking around, observe many millions of broad

acres yet unsubdued by man. They write home enticing accounts for men to leave their old native land, to come here. The accounts get into the papers on all sides, and the information is obtained by all men, the poor as well as others. The platform too is adopted, eloquent speeches are made, great inducements are held out, and men, growing discontented with their present position, seek a new one in a strange land. The gentleman of poor circumstances bids farewell to his friends; the lawyer and physician with small practice aim at a wider sphere; the clever tradesman and the common artizan sigh for a broader arena on which to exercise their powers; the young men out of employ, anxious for work, see, before their imagination, countless posts inviting their acceptance; the farmer of small capital longs to become a large landowner, and encourages himself in the belief that he will soon be a man of great importance; the poor laborer is convinced that he will become independent, and find a comfortable home for his wife and large family, where they may eat to the full and lack nothing. Thus influenced, they severally gather together what they can; sustained by hopeful expectation they prepare to depart. Their friends weep at the very thought, but are resigned when they think that all is for the best. They hasten to some port; they board their vessel; the sound of the cannon is heard; the vessel starts; a volley of cheers rends the air, and, by degrees dying away, tells them that they are hastening to a land of which they know nothing except by hearsay. Surrounded by strangers, they feel that they are beginning a new life. The first sensation of doubt now passes over them. They wish they had not left their old associations; they long to be back again; but it is too late! The die is cast! They console themselves that all is for the best, and that they will soon find themselves in a position in which they would never be had they remained at home. Soon they will be cheered by men of whom they have only heard; soon they will be welcomed by many who are seeking *such as they* to occupy profitable, if not important posts. A few days, and their vessel reaches its destination. The pleasant acquaintance, made during the passage, begins to break up. Some go here, others there.

And where are they? No glad friend greets them; no pleasant looks fall to their lot. They see people, it is true; and if they ask a question respecting anything, if they receive a reply, it is such that reminds them that they are in a *strange land*, far from home. What a fit of grief bursts upon them, as they wipe away the tear silently stealing from the eye! They have to *seek employ*, instead of being *sought*. And whilst they looked for good appointments, they are glad to get into *anything for food and raiment*! They march the streets of our cities, seeking something to do. They are careworn, they are full of sorrow—of sorrow well nigh mounting to despair. They gaze on the mighty St. Lawrence rolling down to the sea; they visit their ship, and wish they had means or courage to go home again. All is disappointment. They remember what they left behind, and distance lends its enhancing charm. They go here and there; they are told that nothing is to be had, or if anything is to be had, that they are not the men. Some are told that they had better go back again. They are *willing* to work—they despise not the most menial tasks. They cannot go back. Onwards they plod their way. No one seems to care for them; no friendly hand grasps theirs; no homely countenance meets theirs. All is so different to home! The Lord's day comes. No sweet sounding chimes greet their ear; but finding out the church, they wend their way thither. Then at once they begin to feel—how different! They gaze no longer on the old ivy-mantled tower; and as they enter the portals, they find, that though in the House of the King of kings, the House of their Father, yet all is owned, by private individuals, in small lots. They know not which way to go; they feel to wish that they had not come. They stay, however, and they worship; and as the voice of God's ministering servant is heard, the glories of the old churches at home rush suddenly upon them, and a thousand associations pass in review before them, and they think of the place where their fathers knelt, where they worshipped for years, and where generations of their ancestors lie mouldering in the dust, awaiting the resurrection. They feel as though in exile, and they are inclined to take up Israel's lamentation and say, "By the waters of Baby-

lon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion."

Now, my brethren, is not this a true, if feebly drawn, picture of the position in which men frequently find themselves on first coming to this country? Do we not, then, see how important a field opens itself for our great Society? Do we not see that here we have work to perform, and no mere maudlin sentiment to indulge? We have only to consider the sad case of that desponding and this forsaken one. We have only to think on the bright expectations of one suddenly damped—of another made morbid. We have only to imagine the sore disappointments of parents, the painful sensations of old and young, not knowing which way to look—their small means failing them, and so they become gradually destitute. And alas! how often it is, that at this crisis the enemy of souls, the great dragon, is most energetic in suggesting a thousand ways to sin. Some he drives to despair, and they give themselves to deadly intoxicating drinks. Others he tempts to do foul crimes, and the Penitentiary becomes their home. Some he bids lay hands on themselves, to deface the image of God. Others to adopt dishonest means for obtaining a livelihood; and to put the best colour on it, and to encourage them, he bids his liege subjects call it sharp and clever. Soon they are given up by what is generally denominated society. And, so far are we from trying to work a reformation, that we are too apt to shut up all channels of communication from them. And thus, those who would be repentant, we heed not; and spurn from our side those who are weighed down with heavy burdens, only anxious to have some one to whom they may confess, and who will be capable of shewing how they may retrieve their character.

Surely, of all times, this is the time for us to hasten to the rescue—for us to unfurl our banners, and raising the glorious Cross of St. George, join the ranks of Michael and his Angels, and fight for our brethren! This is our opportunity for shewing ourselves men, and reaching out a helping hand to a brother in distress—a brother, it may be, far more deserving than ourselves. We must speak comfortably to him. Our manner must be such as to

encourage him to throw off all reserve, and to speak freely. We must help him to find a situation, and aid him meanwhile. And if we are not able to render sufficient assistance, then we must not be content with saying, "I am sorry that I cannot help you any more;" but we must get the means ourselves. What! shall we thus coolly turn our back upon a brother in distress? Thus cast him on a cold world, in a strange land? Thus bid him, who is already weighed down with grief, go and fill up the measure to despair? Be this far from us, over whom the noble banner of St. George is unfurled! Be it our part, rather, to go forth and seek aid, and if necessity arise, let us break our last morsel with him, in holy faith, believing that "the cruise of oil and the little meal shall not fail," till the heavens open, and God Himself pour us out such blessings that our stores shall not be able to contain them. But we must not rest content *with waiting* to be called upon to render assistance. We must *seek out* the needy and distressed. Has not experience already taught us, that, as a rule, those who are objects for our Society to aid, would rather starve than ask relief? And have we not known of strong constitutions broken down for want of bread, and so ruined for life? And if our registers could speak, would they not reveal the tale of many an one left to starve to death? Am I exaggerating? Surely not. We know too truly that this is the case, and we ought to consider it as a standing witness against former indifference. Oh, my brethren, ours is indeed a great, a blessed work! And it is ennobling to all that undertake it. For how can it be otherwise than ennobling, since it brings us into the glorious society of Angels, and above all, brings us to the place where we meet in special manner our Lord and Master—who in His own person declared, that when we give a cup of cold water to a disciple in His name, we give it to Him; that when we feed the hungry, we feed Him; or clothe the naked, it is His destitute body over which we cast the mantle: or when we shelter the homeless, we shelter Him. In this dispensation of abounding grace, He will not reveal himself to afford relief, nor rain down manna from Heaven, as He did once. He has left the glorious privilege of rendering aid, for us, and who of

us will refuse? He speaks from Heaven to us. He points us to our task, and shall we refuse Him? Shall we not rather say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." And when He calls shall we not, with ready mind and cheerful heart, reply, "Lo, here I am; send me wheresoever Thou wilt, and I will obey." And do we ask, Where can we hear His voice, and how can we discern it? Listen! That is His voice which is uttered by the poor and needy—by the sorrowful and the sighing; and poverty, sorrows and sighs are the characteristics whereby we may know that it is His voice. But some may still say, There are so many hypocrites—so many impostors—we have been so often taken in. What then, are we to flag in our work? Surely not. For who made us judges? Did not our Blessed Lord heal ten lepers, and only one turned to give Him thanks? What if nine out of ten of those we assist turn out bad, we have done our duty, which was ours to perform. The rest remains with the Great Judge. For there is but one Judge, and He reserves all judgment to Himself. Do not our civil laws teach us to account every one honest till proved otherwise? Where are the signs of our *redeemed humanity*, if we adopt a lower standard for the laws of the Kingdom of Christ? Shall we lack our reward? Surely not! For He Himself will reward us openly. Even in this world He will make us great—make us approved before men, and at the last will acknowledge us in terms of praise and benediction before His Father and our Father—before the Elect Angels, our holy companions in labour. They never cease from doing His will. Let us not fail! For surely we have more reason than they for doing it, since Christ has honoured us more than they, by passing by them to come to us. For He did not clothe Himself in their nature, but in ours. He came not to redeem them, but us.

Let us, then, betake ourselves with fresh vigour to our task; always remembering that we have to suffer here, one with the other; and that, as surely as we persevere, we shall conquer, like the Great Michael and his Angels. And the dragon and his angels, being conquered by us, shall find no more place; whilst we, listening to the gracious invitation of the Great Captain of our Salvation to

enter into glory, shall lay aside the weapons of our warfare, and taking the golden harp, sing the praises of Zion for ever and ever !

Rings not thy Captain's call to day,
My Brother, in thine ear ?
Gird thee, the summons to obey,
With heart of warrior cheer.
Farewell, or burial need thou not,
But on, and share the conqueror's part !

Do we not profess by our constitution to desire a greater union of action—a more enlarged sympathy—a greater amount of brotherly love ? In fact, is not our Society founded for this very end ? Oh, my brethren, by all that is sacred, let me entreat you to see that we end not in mere profession ! Let me entreat you, by the virtue of our cause. And is it our own individual cause alone ? Is it not rather the cause of our Dear Lord—the Brother of brothers—the Head of all—the Author of all that we have both for time and eternity ? See to what a high and noble position we are raised. We are raised to be no less than messengers of mercy to the sorrowful and sighing Body of Christ—to be no less than stewards in His Great House, to minister to the wants of His people. What a different aspect our neighbourhood would wear if we only did our duty, each man in his several office.

Finally, my dear brethren, let us, one and all, strive to the best of our power to breathe new life into our body. Let us stand firmly together, one supporting the other—bearing and forbearing. Then shall we be mighty to do good, and nothing shall be able to withstand us. Let us be prepared to receive our brethren, as they come, with open purses, with cheering word, with loving heart. Let us make ready a way for them. Let us, above all things, see that they have room in their Father's House that they may worship him, as in their native land. And, if there is not sufficient provision made, then let us not rest content till we have sufficient.

“ Unfurl ye the banner ! yea, open it wide,
And Zion's contentions the sword shall decide ;
Yea, the word of the Spirit, the word of the Lord,
For to love shall His wisdom and rule be restored !
Then unfurl ye the banner—unsheath the bright sword ! ”

Then Angels, looking on us, will rejoice when they see us doing the will of our God. The Eternal Father will behold us to bless us. The Son Eternal will rejoice over us to do us good. Whilst the Holy Ghost, who with the Father and the Son reigneth eternally, will surely keep and sustain us, making all our ways to prosper. And at the last, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and we stand among the saints, what joy it will be to meet those whose love we have gained on earth by faithful ministrations—those who, perhaps, under God, owed their salvation to our care and zeal. Then shall our crowns shine the brighter, and our glory redound the more to the praise of God and our felicity. How sweet, too, will be that reward which we shall enjoy with the Angels, who have been our fellow companions in trial on earth. If Angels rejoiced when they beheld Almighty God creating man from the dust, how much more will they rejoice when they see man perfectly re-created in Christ Jesus!

And if with desire and love they have watched over the mysterious working of redemption, and seen in it the manifold wisdom of God, with what reverence will they behold man raised to sit on the throne before which they bow! For there can be no doubt but that we shall occupy higher grades of glory than they who now are our companions in labour, and our ministering servants. For God the Son took *our* nature, and not *that* of Angels; and whilst it is affirmed that *we are all "partakers of the Divine nature,"* such sublime doctrine is never once breathed respecting Angels.

